



Connected Learning: Creating Recognition Pathways for Global Impact

Learning Symposium Summary

GDN & PCCAT Regional Convening

May 28–30, 2025 | Centennial College Event Centre, Toronto Canada

Event organised by



About the GDN Network: The Groningen Declaration Network (GDN Network) is an international, non-profit federated public benefits organization located in the Netherlands. It represents a voluntary network of like-minded organizations and individuals that seek to make digital student data portability happen. Its network of thought leaders from around the globe are collaborators who seek to support, advise, and offer innovative changes in the ways we share artifacts of learning through digital capacity building to advance rapid access to education and jobs for learners. The GDN Network seeks common ground in best serving the academic and professional mobility needs of citizens worldwide by bringing together stakeholders in the digital student data ecosystem to catalyze change through a Network of Networks model. It seeks to develop and support best practices and globally accepted standards for exchange of data and credentials through educational seminars, delegations, and convenings. Learn more about the GDN Network at: groningendeclaration.org.



About PCCAT: The Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT) is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that facilitates the implementation of policies and practices that support learner mobility and transfer credit. PCCAT achieves this goal through collaboration, connecting institutions, transfer organizations, and stakeholders dedicated to advancing learner mobility in Canada. Through collaborative research, knowledge sharing, and policy support, PCCAT helps develop and connect jurisdictional tools and effective practices that enhance institutional and organizational capacity for learner pathways and mobility. By promoting the recognition of learner mobility and transfer credit nationwide, PCCAT works to improve learner access to pathways in post-secondary education, supporting a more connected and accessible education system across Canada. Learn more about PCCAT at pccat.ca.

Table of Contents

<i>Context of the Conference</i>	3
<i>Connected Learning: Creating Recognition Pathways for Global Impact</i>	3
<i>Overarching Ideas and Calls for Action</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	9
<i>Welcome</i>	10
<i>Lifelong Learning in the UNESCO Global Convention – Pathways to Recognition and Mobility</i>	11
<i>Credential Assessment and Recognition Procedures in Canada: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities</i>	13
<i>Unifying the Data World Across Segments and Countries</i>	14
<i>Jurisdictional Updates, Collaboration, and Dialogue for Learner Mobility Across Canada</i>	15
<i>Workshop 1+2: Aligning for Impact: Principles-Based Interoperability for Global Learner Mobility</i>	19
<i>What’s in a Name? Untangling Key Transfer Concepts in Ontario</i>	23
<i>Breaking Down Barriers and Building Learner Pathways Across Jurisdictions – Alberta, Canada, and Globally</i>	24
<i>Maximizing the Use of Digital Transcript Data for Admissions Processing: Unpacking XML Transcripts</i>	26
<i>Reconciliation in Action: Priorities for Indigenous Admissions and Transferability</i> ..	30
<i>The Paris Declaration on the Equality of Recognition</i>	31
<i>Building the Canadian Transfer System – An Action Plan</i>	32
<i>Driving Canada: Recognition Gaps, Systemic Barriers, and Policy Futures</i>	33
<i>Co-Creating Next-Generation Principles for Recognition, Transfer, and Governance to Support Mobility</i>	34
<i>Closing Reflections: Building Together, Moving Forward</i>	36

Context of the Conference

Connected Learning: Creating Recognition Pathways for Global Impact

GDN & PCCAT Regional Convening May 28–30, 2025 | Centennial College Event Centre, Toronto

In May 2025, the **Groningen Declaration Network (GDN)** and the **Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT)** co-hosted a landmark regional summit in Toronto. Held at Centennial College, “**Connected Learning: Creating Recognition Pathways for Global Impact**” brought together global and Canadian leaders, policymakers, and practitioners to explore the future of learner mobility, credential recognition, and digital data interoperability.

Over three days of collaborative dialogue, participants engaged in interactive panels, working sessions, and international case studies, all focused on designing systems that promote equitable, learner-centered pathways. The event also marked the formalization of a strengthened partnership between GDN and PCCAT through a new Memorandum of Understanding—solidifying a shared commitment to more accessible and globally integrated recognition practices.

This publication provides a **high-level summary of the key themes, insights, and emerging priorities** from select sessions that arose from the convening. It is intended as a resource for institutions, governments, and organizations interested in the future of credential exchange and recognition. By capturing the collective thinking from this international dialogue, the summary aims to inform continued collaboration and inspire action toward more seamless and secure learner mobility systems. We welcome future or additional contributions from presenters, which will be added to the landing page as they become available.

As global demands for flexible, portable learning records grow, the work of GDN and PCCAT—each a leader in their domain—offers a model for how regional and international networks can come together to support inclusive, transparent, and

interoperable solutions. On behalf of the two networks, we extend our thanks to the over 80 speakers and more than 100 delegates from organizations, institutions, allied associations, and governments across Canada and around the world who gave of their valuable time to ensure rich conversation and content for the first, inaugural shared regional meeting between the GDN Network and PCCAT. We are excited about future possibilities to continue to grow our work together and advance learner mobility into and beyond educational institutions.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Duklas

*Executive Director, GDN Network;
President, Duklas Cornerstone
Consulting Inc.*

Ann Marie Lyseng

*Chair, PCCAT; Senior Manager,
Alberta Council on Admissions &
Transfer (ACAT) Secretariat/Learner
Pathways, Alberta Advanced
Education*

Note: All session videos are available in the [GDN Video Resource Library](#), along with the corresponding presentation decks. They are also accessible through the CVENT platform for attendees who participated in the event, both in person and online.



Overarching Ideas and Calls for Action

Identified Themes & Thematic Call-to-Action List

Theme

GDN Governance Consultation

Inclusion & Indigenous Engagement

Data & Interoperability Standards

Recognition of Prior Learning (PLAR) & Microcredentials

Transfer Tools & Technology Enablement

Sample Potential Calls to Action

- Participants were encouraged to engage with the GDN governance consultation to support its evolution and development
- Integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and learning outcomes into recognition frameworks
- Onboard Indigenous schools and education authorities to enable XML-based transcript sharing
- Support co-development of culturally appropriate PLAR and transfer processes
- Audit policies, training, and pathways, and advocate nationally for changes
- Create credential evaluation models and inclusive services and ensure immigrant representation in the development and delivery phases
- Identify and implement shared platforms, and consider implementing low-cost tech for Indigenous institutions
- Harmonize technical and credential data standards across jurisdictions (e.g., JSON-LD, XML)
- Promote adoption of open learner record formats
- Align recognition frameworks with UNESCO Global Recognition Convention and Lisbon Convention principles
- Develop a national digital PLAR network with learner-centered design principles at its core
- Pilot innovative assessment tools, including Virtual Reality to advance recognition and access
- Expand recognition for modular and non-formal learning (e.g., military, workplace, and community-based learning)
- Implement intuitive, centralized credit transfer guides and pathway navigation tools
- Integrate articulation data directly into Student Information Systems (SIS)

Trust Building through Collaboration & Capacity Building

Transparency & Learner Communication

Workforce & Lifelong Learning Alignment

- Develop “program builders” that allow real-time comparison of credential components
- Standardized terms, common GEO codes, pan-Canadian guides
- Establish interprovincial working groups or subcommittees to share best practices
- Continue to convene annual national symposiums on learner mobility and recognition in partnership with the GDN
- Secure funding for pilot projects that test scalable, interoperable recognition models
- Foster a transfer culture in home organizations and gather student input and promote collaboration
- Simplify and standardize transfer information for students across all jurisdictions
- Ensure clear guidance on timelines, costs, and appeal mechanisms for credit recognition
- Engage learners in the co-design of recognition processes and tools
- Create recognition pathways that support upskilling and reskilling, aligned with labour market demand
- Enable lifelong learning passports that track credentials from various providers
- Promote inter-sectoral collaboration with employment, industry, and education partners



CONNECTED LEARNING



CREATING RECOGNITION PATHWAYS
FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

MAY 28 - 30, 2025

Day 1

May 28, 2025





Introduction

Day One – May 28, 2025: Setting the Stage for Connected Learning

The summit launched with a robust exploration of the foundations of interoperable credentialing and learner mobility. Through opening plenaries and thematic breakout sessions, participants dove into:

- The vision of a “Network of Networks”, where institutions and systems seamlessly exchange learner data across borders.
- International case studies and success models, showcasing interoperable frameworks and policy innovations in practice.
- Strategies for building trust, governance, and data privacy into secure credential ecosystems.
- The role of micro-credentials and pathway innovation in expanding access and educational equity.
- Collaborative approaches for aligning Canadian and global data standards, to strengthen transfer and recognition pathways.

This opening day set a powerful tone—bridging global expertise and local action to shape equitable, learner-centered systems for connected learning. Session highlights and calls to action are shared below.

[Watch Recording](#)

Welcome

- **Ann Marie Lyseng**, *Chair, PCCAT; Senior Manager, Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) Secretariat/Learner Pathways, Alberta Advanced Education*
- **Charmaine Hack**, *VP, External Relations, Enrolment & Partnership, Centennial College*
- **Dr. Craig Stephenson**, *President and CEO, Centennial College*

Ann Marie Lyseng, Chair of PCCAT, welcomed attendees by underscoring the central role of learner mobility and recognition pathways in shaping equitable, accessible education systems. She expressed deep appreciation for the collective efforts of GDN, PCCAT, and Centennial College, whose partnership made the convening possible.

Charmaine Hack, representing the Groningen Declaration Network, offered a compelling overview of GDN's mission to advance global digital credential recognition and student data portability. She emphasized the importance of cross-sector and cross-border collaboration, framing the work ahead as essential to expanding learners' access to education and employment opportunities worldwide.

Dr. Craig Stephenson, President and CEO of Centennial College, brought a forward-looking institutional perspective, reflecting on the college's response to recent global challenges such as the pandemic and international enrollment restrictions. He spoke to Centennial's commitment to financial resilience, digital transformation, and AI integration in education, encouraging participants to "reach higher" and embrace innovation in pursuit of the art of the possible.



Together, these opening perspectives established a dynamic tone for the day's sessions, which explored themes of interoperable systems, global recognition frameworks, micro-credentials, data privacy, trust-building, and the evolution of a Network of Networks. The discussions set a strong foundation for charting the future of connected learning in Canada and beyond.

[Watch Recording](#)

Lifelong Learning in the UNESCO Global Convention – Pathways to Recognition and Mobility

Borhene Chakroun, *Director for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO*

Borhene Chakroun delivered a thought-provoking keynote on the evolving landscape of lifelong learning and global qualification recognition. Drawing from the ***UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education***,¹ he highlighted its transformative aim: to foster international cooperation, ensure fair and transparent recognition practices, and support inclusive pathways for learners worldwide.

In his remarks, Borhene provided a global view of education reform, addressing the rising mobility of students, the proliferation of national qualifications frameworks, and the increasing complexity of credentialing systems. He underscored the urgent need for a common language of recognition—rooted in learning outcomes—that transcends institutional and national boundaries. Importantly, he urged stakeholders to adopt a broader, more holistic vision of lifelong learning that extends beyond labour market needs, advocating instead for a “recognition entitlement”—a principle that every learner, regardless of background or context, should have the right to fair recognition of their skills and qualifications.

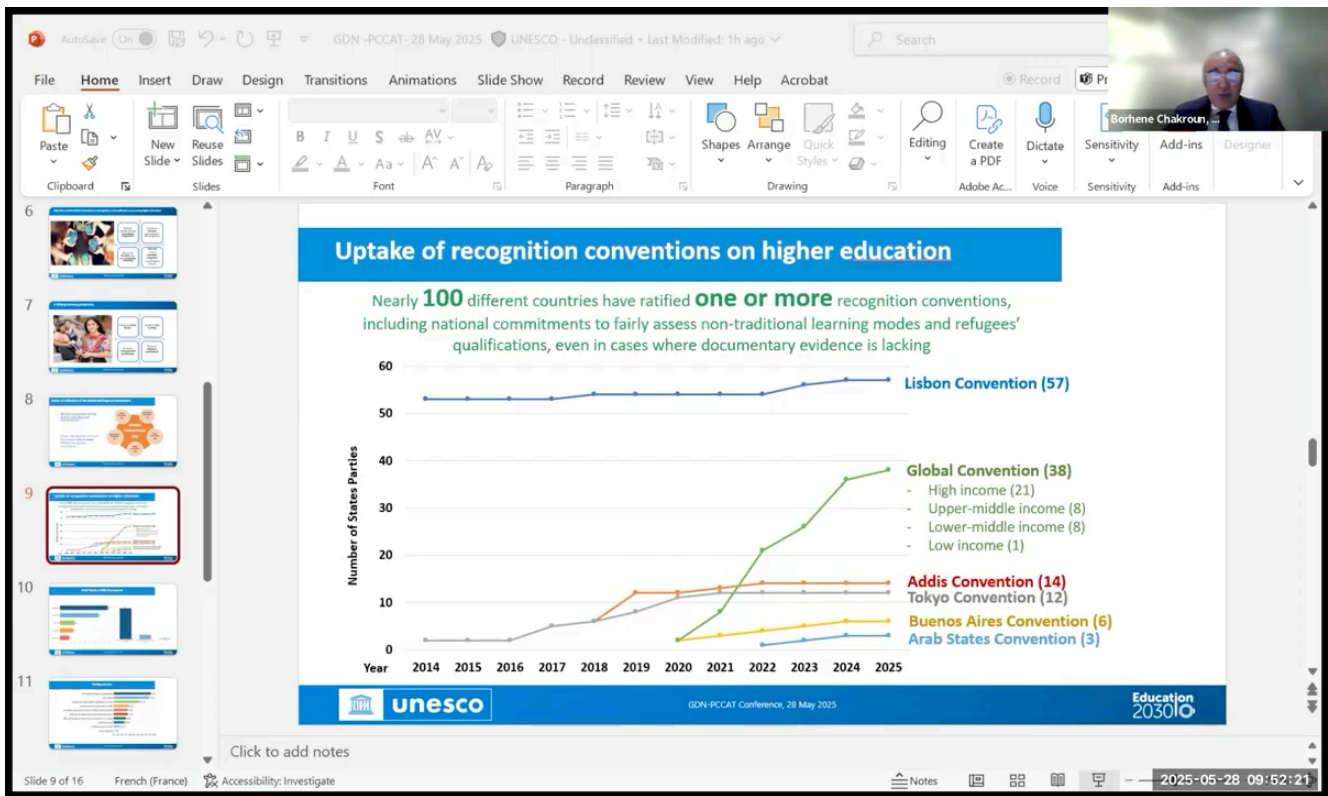
Borhene also shared encouraging progress in the adoption of the Convention, underscoring its pivotal role in advancing lifelong learning through open and inclusive recognition, including modular and non-formal learning pathways. Adopted in 2019 and entering into force on March 5, 2023, the Convention has since been ratified by 38 countries as of April 2025. These countries collectively host approximately 30 percent of the world’s 6.4 million internationally mobile students.

Borhene highlighted that the Convention goes beyond traditional degree programs—explicitly supporting recognition of prior learning, partial studies, micro-credentials, and online or blended education—thereby legitimizing learning earned outside the classroom. He noted that many nations are already working to implement national qualifications frameworks, and this “open recognition” framework ensures that skills and modular learning experiences are recognized globally. By proposing a “recognition entitlement,” he emphasized every learner’s right to have skills—even those acquired in informal settings—fairly assessed and recognized. This model of open recognition is proving essential to enhancing equitable access and lifelong learning worldwide.

¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/global-convention>

His remarks offered both a strategic vision and a moral imperative, reinforcing the convening's focus on building more equitable, interoperable, and learner-centred recognition systems globally.

[Watch Recording](#)



Credential Assessment and Recognition Procedures in Canada: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

Michael Ringuette, *Coordinator, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)*

Michael Ringuette offered a detailed and forward-looking perspective on the implementation of the UNESCO Global Recognition Convention in the Canadian context, emphasizing its strong alignment with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which Canada ratified in 2018. He highlighted that while the two conventions are distinct, they share foundational principles around fair, transparent, and learner-focused recognition—making the Global Convention a natural extension of Canada's existing commitments to international mobility and credential transparency.

Ringuette provided an overview of Canada's decentralized recognition ecosystem, where a range of actors—including post-secondary institutions, professional regulators, and credential assessment services—each play a role in evaluating qualifications. While this multi-stakeholder model supports flexibility, he acknowledged that it also introduces fragmentation, limited portability, and inconsistent practices, which can pose barriers to learners navigating the system.

His presentation outlined clear opportunities for innovation, including improved coordination across jurisdictions, more strategic use of existing legislation and frameworks, and the integration of technology to streamline and enhance transparency in recognition processes. He also emphasized the importance of consulting applicants themselves, ensuring that systems are not only technically sound but responsive to real learner experiences.

Ringuette concluded with a call to action: for stakeholders across sectors to collaborate in developing innovative, learner-centred solutions that uphold both the spirit and practical potential of the Global Convention—ultimately enabling more consistent, equitable recognition outcomes across Canada and beyond.

[Watch Recording](#)

Unifying the Data World Across Segments and Countries

Alexander Jackl, *CEO & President, Bardic Systems, Inc.; Board Chair, Data Standards United*

Alex Jackl, a leading voice in digital education infrastructure and a key contributor to Data Standards United and PESC, delivered an insightful presentation on the imperative of unifying data standards across sectors and borders to support lifelong learning and global credential mobility. He emphasized that in an era of dynamic, learner-driven pathways, interoperability is not a luxury—it's a necessity. Yet, achieving it remains a complex challenge, entangled in technical constraints, financial limitations, and the lack of coordinated governance.

Jackl addressed the urgent need to dismantle data silos between education, employment, and credentialing systems, advocating for the creation of a seamless ecosystem where learner records can flow freely and securely. He spotlighted the ongoing transition from XML-based transcripts to JSON-LD formats, a crucial evolution that enables more flexible, machine-readable data exchange—paving the way for smarter, more interoperable learning records that can better serve both institutions and individuals.

He also acknowledged the broader policy and infrastructure context, noting how recent changes complicate momentum in standardization initiatives, underscoring the need for sustained leadership and cross-sector collaboration.

Ultimately, Jackl framed this work not as a purely technical problem, but as a mission to empower learners—calling on stakeholders to rally around shared standards that prioritize equity, mobility, and lifelong access work and learning, an economic imperative.

[Watch Recording](#)

Jurisdictional Updates, Collaboration, and Dialogue for Learner Mobility Across Canada

- **Ann Marie Lyseng**, *Chair, PCCAT; Senior Manager, Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) Secretariat/Learner Pathways, Alberta Advanced Education*
- **Carley McDougall**, *Executive Director, Campus Manitoba (CMB)*
- **Jennifer Kitching**, *Executive Director, Council on Admission & Transfer for Nova Scotia*
- **Sheldon MacLeod**, *Executive Director, CampusNB, Council on Articulations and Transfers of New Brunswick*
- **Nick Hanson**, *Vice President, Programs, Research and External Relations, Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)*
- **Rob Fleming**, *Executive Director and Co-Chair, British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)*
- **Magali Robitaille**, *Expert Counselor in Recognition of Acquired Competencies (RAC), Centre d'expertise en reconnaissance des acquis et des compétences, Cégep Marie-Victorin*

A dynamic panel of jurisdictional representatives from across Canada shared current updates and strategic priorities in the areas of credit transfer, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and learner mobility. While each region operates within its own educational framework, common themes emerged—underscoring both shared challenges and region-specific innovations in improving access and mobility for post-secondary learners.

In Atlantic Canada, panelists from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick highlighted their ongoing efforts to streamline articulation agreements and strengthen inter-institutional collaboration, particularly for learners transitioning between colleges and universities. Discussions emphasized the need for more coordinated systems to support recognition of experiential learning and non-traditional credentials.

From Quebec, Magali Côté detailed innovative approaches to RPL, including the use of virtual reality (VR) tools to evaluate competencies in fields like early childhood education and social work—especially where direct observation is restricted. Quebec's Recognition of Acquired Competencies (RAC) model was noted for its flexibility, allowing learners to work while completing assessments over one to two years. Panelists also shared insights on cost structures, with public colleges offering low fees and universities setting their own, while professional-level assessments remain free of charge.

In Ontario, the conversation centered on enhancing the clarity and accessibility of transfer pathways, with efforts focused on digitizing processes, standardizing credit

equivalency tools, and ensuring consistent communication to students. Ontario's large and complex system was noted for both its opportunities and barriers, particularly for learners navigating between sectors.

Representatives from Manitoba and Alberta spoke to the challenges of managing regional diversity and rural access, and the importance of building Indigenous education pathways that respect cultural knowledge and community contexts. Alberta emphasized continued work in integrating military and professional learning into formal credential systems.

In British Columbia, panelists highlighted a mature credit transfer framework supported by a centralized system, while also recognizing ongoing challenges related to program-level granularity, micro-credentials, and cross-sector recognition. The province is exploring how to better support learners moving across institutional and program boundaries with greater agility.

Across all jurisdictions, participants echoed the need for increased collaboration, greater transparency, and a shared national vision for learner mobility. There was strong consensus that advancing equitable and accessible transfer systems requires interprovincial cooperation, robust digital infrastructure, and a student-centred approach to recognition.

[Watch Recording](#)

The collage features four main elements:


- Top Left:** A flowchart titled "Recognition of Acquired Competencies (RAC) in Québec" with the subtitle "Diploma as an Official Recognition". It details the "Validation Process" starting with "Candidate's File Analysis" (split into "Curricular Eligibility" and "Extracurricular Eligibility"), leading to "Academic Records" (noted as a "Basic principle anchored in RAC policies and practices"), then "Evaluation Process" (leading to "Program Competencies"), and finally a "Diploma" (noted as "Same competencies = Same diploma"). A box on the left lists "GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT, A WINNING CONDITION" with sub-points: "Policies", "Proper fundings", "Clear guidelines", and "Providing resources to support".
- Top Right:** A photograph of a panel discussion with five participants seated at a table with laptops and microphones.
- Bottom Left:** A video thumbnail for Magali Robitaille, showing her from the chest up.
- Bottom Right:** A video thumbnail for Rob Fleming, showing him from the chest up. The background includes the BCCAT logo and the text "BRITISH COUNCIL ON ADULT & PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS & TRANSFER". A timestamp "2025-05-28 11:57:43" is visible in the bottom right corner.



**CONNECTED
LEARNING** 

CREATING RECOGNITION PATHWAYS
FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

MAY 28 - 30, 2025



Day 2

May 29, 2025



About CanPESC & Data Interests

- ❑ Canadian PESC User Group (*since 2011*) – focused on digital, standards-based, data exchange - <https://pesc.org/canadian-pesc-user-group/>
- ❑ Members from Canadian post-secondary institutions, hubs, government, vendors
- ❑ Focus: Promote and develop the use of PESC XML data standards for educational record exchange in support of student mobility across Canada
- ❑ Goal: Cross-Canada and global standards-based data exchange
- ❑ Community buy-in: Get all interested parties and organizations on the same page – understanding the value of using data standards
- ❑ "Data Enthusiasts" – what do people need to know to adopt data standards together?

GDN Events

Camera

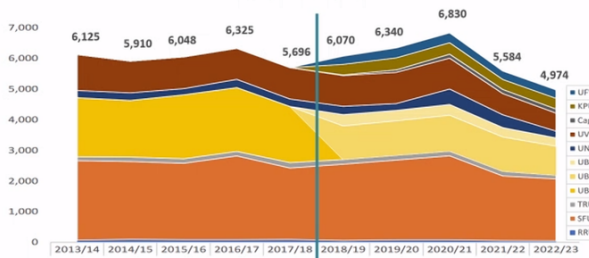


CathyvanSoest



BC TRANSFER STUDENTS BY RECEIVER PSI

(2013/14 – 2022/23)



Groningen Declaration Network

BCCAT

Camera



Workshop 1+2: Aligning for Impact: Principles-Based Interoperability for Global Learner Mobility

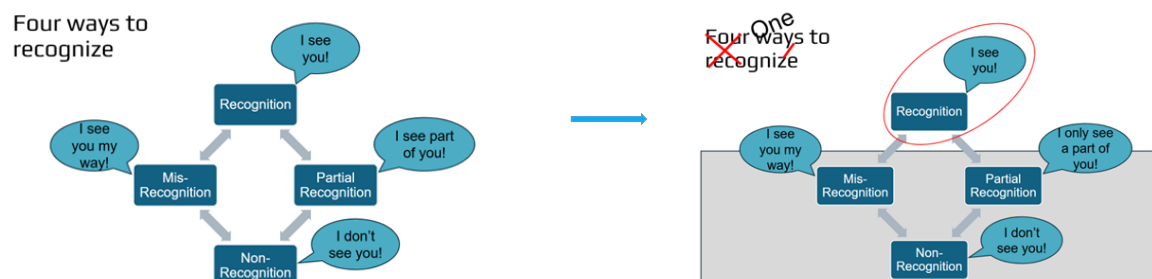
- **Alexander Jackl**, *CEO & President, Bardic Systems, Inc.; Board Chair, Data Standards United*
- **Nan Travers**, *Director, Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning, SUNY Empire State University*
- **Michael Feldstein**, *Chief Strategy Officer, 1EdTech Consortium*
- **Jeanne Kitchens**, *Chief Technology Services Officer, Credential Engine*
- **Joanne Duklas**, *Executive Director, The GDN Network; Consultant, Duklas Cornerstone Consulting Inc.*

Participants (in person and online) joined a 90-minute workshop to explore what makes learner mobility possible and creates barriers as we redesign credentials and supporting frameworks to advance rapid access to work and learning. This workshop was intended as an energizing and inclusive experience that helped set the stage for deeper exploration at future convenings such as at the GDN Annual Meetings.

Participants were invited to think boldly and collaboratively about how to enable learner and worker mobility through principles-based design that centers equity, trust, and opportunity. Around the world, systems are tackling the challenge of creating equitable pathways that recognize learning wherever it occurs and the GDN remains committed as does PCCAT in Canada to achieve transformational change.

Dr. Travers began the session by challenging the audience in person and online to engage in a paradigm shift of thinking about when and how to recognize learning and bring in the informal and non-formal workplace learning into their lexicon of considerations when assessing prior learning for admission and transfer (Figure 1). This concept aligns with the Global Recognition Convention which calls on institutions, allied organizations, governments and employers to recognize lifelong learning.

Figure 1: Shifting the Paradigm for Recognition



Source 1: Travers, D. personal communications. GDN PCCAT Connected Learning Summit. May 2025.

This shift requires policy, procedure, and system designers to build policies and frameworks that acknowledge different forms of learning and to design student information systems and credential recognition and exchange technologies using open standards and interoperable principles that support full recognition in a seamless way. The goal here would be to include more and different forms of learning modalities and content, to expand their prior learning practices, and to help their local institutions, governments, and communities embrace the full range of learning and skills and competency development to support rapid upskilling and cross skilling of learners. Doing so helps improve service and transparency, supports closing the skills gap and better prepares learners for the work of today and tomorrow. In this model, true recognition broadens perspectives and emphasizes that learners are “seen” in a holistic manner. By adopting this thinking, comprehensive learner mobility is possible.

To illicit insights from the participants, Kitchens leveraged a user story format where the audience was introduced to Olivia, a talented professional with informal, formal and work-based credentials and experiences in multiple jobs and locations. Her gap? She doesn't fully understand how to communicate or leverage her learning, and she lacks verifiable recognition of her skills/ competencies. Olivia is ready to build upon her achievements and move up in a new career. She wants to find a college/university that will award her credit for her previous learning and work experience. She is willing to work hard and as a caregiver, she needs to balance determination with financial and support obligations.

The participants were asked to explore the following concepts to test out these principals on Olivia's recognition and mobility journey.

1. What kinds of learning and work experiences might Olivia bring with her?
2. What are the roadblocks to recognition and validation?
3. What systems or supports would make her mobility smoother and her competencies more visible?
4. What barriers exist due to traditional thinking or outdated data practices?
5. What kinds of incremental credentials or digital tools might help Olivia take control?
6. How can Olivia get access to tools without being enrolled?
7.What other questions can we ask?

The participants were then asked to explore how to change their practices to enable routing Olivia's journey to a destination using the following anchor questions:

1. How can we build a mobility and portability framework that is scalable beneficial to everyone?
2. What principles should underpin this model?
3. What must learners, employers, and institutions trust in this model?
4. How can we ensure data is discoverable and interoperable?

5. ...What other questions do we need to ask?

The participants collaborated in breakout discussions. Using sticky notes, dot voting, and a shared Padlet, they responded to two key questions: *What shared principles are essential for learner mobility?* And *what are the barriers?*

The most-supported responses revealed a strong desire for systems built on trust, shared quality assurance, and common language. Participants emphasized the need for mutual recognition between institutions, especially through credible and aligned standards. They also called for greater clarity and consistency in how we define credentials and competencies—without which mobility becomes fragmented and confusing. And importantly, many groups stressed the importance of keeping learners at the centre.

Barriers to mobility focused on familiar challenges: fragmented policies, institutional silos, and outdated infrastructure. These issues keep learning records trapped and make collaboration across systems difficult.

Together, the insights point to a clear message: enabling learner mobility isn't just about technology or policy—it's about alignment, shared trust, and designing with learners in mind.

Top Themes: Principles (Ensuring Learner Mobility):

1. Trust & Mutual Recognition

- **Examples:**
 - “Trust other Post Secondary Institutions”
 - Create a “Network of Trust”
- **Theme Insight:** There is a strong emphasis on creating a system built on institutional trust which is deemed essential for learner mobility across regions, sectors and systems.

2. Quality Assurance & Shared Standards

- **Examples:**
 - “A shared Quality Assurance process especially in new credential creation”
 - “High-quality and accessible quality assurance”
- **Theme Insight:** Participants stress the need for **common, credible assurance mechanisms** to validate credentials — particularly new ones like microcredentials.

3. Shared Language and Definitions

- **Examples:**
 - “Proper Definitions”
 - “Common vocabulary and common practices”

4. Learner-Centric Recognition

- **Theme Insight:** A foundational issue is lack of semantic alignment. Shared language facilitates clearer interpretation, equivalency and comparability of learning records.
- **Example:**
 - “Learner voice and choice must be present at all levels”
- **Theme Insight:** Equity in pathways requires policies and infrastructures that **centre learner agency**, needs and lived experience.

Top Themes: Barriers to Learner Mobility:

1. Fragmented Policy and Governance

- **Examples:**
 - “Policy differences between provinces”
 - “Standardization of Nuances”
- **Theme Insight:** Jurisdictional fragmentation — across provinces, institutions, or sectors — is a significant hurdle for seamless learner transitions.

2. Silos and Institutional Inertia

- **Examples:**
 - “Silos”
 - “Institutional resources”
- **Theme Insight:** Institutional reluctance or inability to collaborate blocks the interoperability and trust needed for mobility.

3. Outdated or Inflexible Infrastructure

- **Example:**
 - “Dated infrastructure”
- **Theme Insight:** Technological limitations — systems that can't speak to each other or scale — were seen as key barriers to implementation. This can often occur with local, custom designed systems.

[Watch Recording](#)

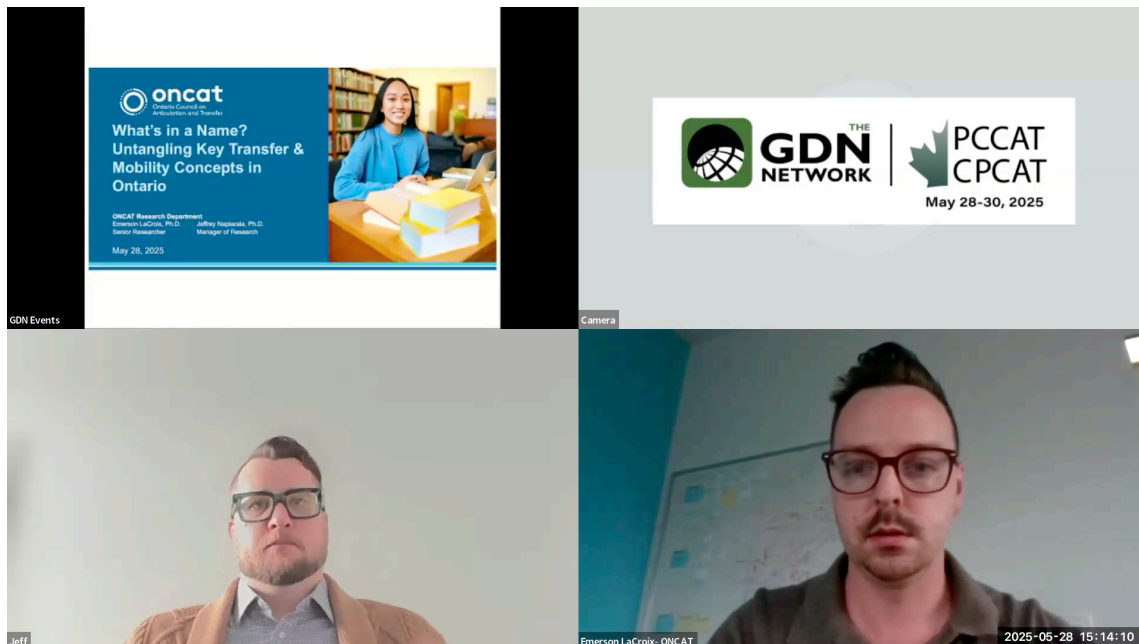
What's in a Name? Untangling Key Transfer Concepts in Ontario

- **Emerson LaCroix**, *Senior Researcher, Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)*
- **Jeffrey Napierala**, *Manager of Research, Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)*

Jeffrey Napierala and Emerson LaCroix shared the findings from an ONCAT study² to surface semantic nomenclature differences in the region that impede or support transfer opportunities for learners.

Their findings amplified the ambiguity and interchangeability in how terms were used across different sources, a variety that faces learners daily both in Ontario and beyond. The presenters shared draft definitions they had developed for mobility, transfer, and pathway. They emphasized that transfer is a subset of mobility, with all transfer students being mobile, but not all mobile students transferring. The presentation concluded with a discussion of statistics on student mobility in Ontario and next steps for finalizing and disseminating the definitions.

[Watch Recording](#)



² <https://oncat.ca/publications+detail+how-do-students-learn-about-transfer-pse-students-use-of-transfer-information-sources-in-ontario>

Breaking Down Barriers and Building Learner Pathways Across Jurisdictions – Alberta, Canada, and Globally

- **Ann Marie Lyseng**, *Chair, PCCAT; Senior Manager, Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) Secretariat/Learner Pathways, Alberta Advanced Education*
- **Chalaing Gray**, *Articulation Coordinator, ACAT Secretariat/Learner Pathways and Alberta Advanced Education*
- **Matt Bemis**, *Sr. Associate University Registrar, University of Southern California; Co-Chair, PESC GEO Code User Group*
- **Suzette Brémault-Phillips**, *Director, HiMARC, University of Alberta; Chair and Principal Investigator, Canadian Military, Veteran & Families and Campus Connected Consortium (CMVFC3) and AB-MVF3C (Alberta Military, Veteran and Family Connected Campus Consortium; ab.mvf3c.ca)*
- **Donald Moore**, *Associate Vice President Academic/ Dean, Portage College; Co-Chair, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Working Group, CMVF3C*

This session focused on highlighting efforts to advance pathways and standards for military and apprenticeship training.

Chalaing Gray, the articulation coordinator at the ACAT Secretariat, presented on the Alberta transfer credit awarded system and its use of standardized processes to enhance engagement and facilitate learner mobility. She highlighted the system's use of PESC geocodes to track institutions and its application to interprovincial high school transitions, apprenticeship education, and military credential recognition. Gray also discussed the recent collaboration with the CMVF3C Canadian military veteran family connected campus consortium, emphasizing the importance of enabling learners through these pathways.

Suzette Brémault-Phillips discussed the Canadian Military, Veteran and Family Connected Consortium's partnership with PCCAT to advance learner mobility and credit recognition for military personnel across provincial and international structures. She highlighted the significant number of military members in Canada and the need to establish pathways for their education and career transitions, emphasizing the importance of collaboration with post-secondary institutions and provincial structures.

Don Moore presented an overview of military credential recognition in the Ontario postsecondary system. He identified four categories of institutions, ranging from those that do not explicitly address military credential recognition to those with robust, publicly accessible maps of military training to programming pathways. Moore highlighted existing equivalencies between military and skilled trades qualifications across provinces, noting that this mobility already exists within the system. He also

discussed the development of pathways from military credentials to post-secondary certificates, diplomas, and degrees, emphasizing the need for transparent and straightforward mapping of these equivalencies to support student mobility and recognition of military training. Finally, Moore provided information on accessing military training program details through the CAF ACE portal, which offers comprehensive training reports and equivalency information for post-secondary institutions.

Lyseng presented on behalf of Matt Bemis, highlighting the soft launch of the updated data standard for the GEOCODES, which now includes both secondary and post-secondary institutions. She emphasized the importance of this standard for enabling machine-readable data exchange and interoperability across organizations, referencing USC's involvement and Bemis' leadership in developing this system. The presentation included details on the technical updates, including API functionality and mass upload capabilities, while also touching on the historical context and global scope of the geocode project, which now covers over 192 countries and territories.

[Watch Recording](#)



Maximizing the Use of Digital Transcript Data for Admissions Processing: Unpacking XML Transcripts

- **Ben Harper**, *Solutions Architect, OCAS Application Services Inc.*
- **Jennifer Kitching**, *Executive Director, Council on Admission & Transfer for Nova Scotia*
- **Joseph Minichini**, *Assistant Registrar, Policy & Projects, University of Toronto*
- **Cathy van Soest**, *Past Co-Chair, CanPESC, Canadian PESC User Group*

This session focused on maximizing the use of digital transcript data for admissions and assessment, featuring resources and tools developed by CanPESC to standardize and process transcript information across Canadian institutions. The panel discussed the progress, benefits, and future plans for their transcript data standardization efforts, including potential global applications and the need for AI integration in interpreting unstructured transcript data.

CanPESC, a volunteer group established in 2011, works to harmonize data standards across Canada, coordinating with various stakeholders, including educational institutions, government, and vendors. The group formed a Common Digital Layout Working Group in 2019 to address the challenge of making transcript data more receiver-centric and easier to read, leading to the creation of a standardized layout and tools published in 2021 and 2022, respectively. The group's work aims to provide reusable tools for processing transcripts more efficiently, addressing the variability in transcript formats and layouts across institutions.

Harper presented an open-source tool that converts XML transcripts into human-readable PDF format in both English and French, which makes it easier for admissions staff to interpret academic records. The tool supports both high school and post-secondary transcripts from different provinces in Canada, ensuring consistent data placement and localization features to accommodate different languages and institutional terminology. The tool is available as a command-line interface or a containerized API, licensed under MIT, and is designed to be accessible and customizable for institutions' specific needs.

The University of Toronto implemented a PDF generation system for electronic transcripts, transitioning from a legacy flat file format to the PESC XML standard in 2022. The institution customized a CDL tool to create standardized PDF transcripts that integrate with their admissions workflow, replacing their 1998 legacy system. The new system allows admissions staff to view and manipulate PDF transcripts directly in their Slate admissions system, eliminating the need to switch between multiple platforms and improving efficiency. The implementation was a collaborative effort

between IT and admissions teams, demonstrating that while significant effort is required, the resulting workflow improvements are substantial.

The CDL working group discussed the progress and benefits of their transcript data standardization tool, highlighting its implementation by several Ontario institutions and its potential for global use. They emphasized the tool's open-source nature and ongoing improvements, including updates to the PESC version and plans to support future transcript formats and geocoding.

[Watch Recording](#)





CONNECTED LEARNING

CREATING RECOGNITION PATHWAYS
FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

MAY 28 - 30, 2025



Day 3

May 30, 2025



GDN NETWORK **Resonance**

Key discussion points

1. What recommendations might you have for a future GDN Governance Framework that is intended for use by the community to advance creation of digital ecosystems in region?
2. What other principles do you suggest it include?
3. What further advice would the members suggest?

GDN Events



Reconciliation in Action: Priorities for Indigenous Admissions and Transferability

Ashley Maracle, *Dean, Standalone Programs, First Nations Technical Institute*

Day three opened with Ashley Maracle delivering a keynote presentation on reconciliation and action priorities for admissions and transfer credit from an Indigenous perspective. She discussed the historical context of the Indigenous Institute sector in Canada, emphasizing self-determination and the need for community engagement in educational programming. The session also touched on the launch of the first fully accredited Indigenous degree program and the ongoing development of standards and credentials within the sector.

In her talk, Maracle focused on discussing reconciliation and its meaning to participants, with an emphasis on active participation and self-determination. The discussion also covered FNTI's approach to online programming, which accommodates diverse Indigenous communities and incorporates localized teachings into the curriculum. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own roles in reconciliation and to consider how they can actively contribute to this process.

Maracle discussed the importance of ensuring that educational programming meets specific Indigenous needs and standards, highlighting three key accreditation bodies: the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium³, the National Indigenous Accreditation Board⁴, and the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council⁵. Maracle noted the importance of a recent partnership between the National Indigenous Accreditation Board and the Canadian Association for Social Work Education, which seeks to streamline accreditation processes in a manner that better aligns with Indigenous priorities. Maracle also shared calls to action, including training administrative staff on cultural safety and Indigenous histories, auditing admission and credentialing policies through an Indigenous equity lens, and engaging Indigenous partners in co-creating frameworks.

[Watch Recording](#)

³ <https://winhec.org>

⁴ <https://www.niab.ca>

⁵ <https://iaesc.ca>

The Paris Declaration on the Equality of Recognition

Don Present, *President, Learning Agents Inc.; Co-convenor, Paris ePIC Open Recognition Conference; Board Chair, Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA)*

Don Present provided a compelling narrative of the evolution and significance of digital badges and micro-credentials, emphasizing their role in recognizing lifelong learning beyond traditional academic achievements. He highlighted the need for holistic recognition systems that acknowledge diverse forms of learning, including informal and workplace-based experiences, and criticized current frameworks for overemphasizing skills and technology over human narratives and cultural contexts. Present also shared examples of innovative recognition practices, such as the Paris Declaration on the Equality of Recognition⁶ and frameworks by organizations like the Scottish Qualifications Authority, while advocating for more flexible and inclusive approaches to credentialing.

[Watch Recording](#)



⁶ References:

Recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning in UNESCO member states

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232656>

European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3093>

RPL Quality Assurance Manual <https://capla.ca/rpl-ga-manual/>

Book: The International Indigenous Recognition Of Prior Learning (RPL) Practitioner Manual

Edited by Karihwakeron Tim Thompson

Building the Canadian Transfer System – An Action Plan

- **Andrew Wilson**, *Director of IT, Data and Transfer Services, Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)*
- **Ann Marie Lyseng**, *Senior Manager, ACAT Secretariat/Learner Pathways; Chair, PCCAT*
- **Mike Winsemann**, *Director, Transfer & Technology, BC Council on Admissions & Transfer*
- **Wendy Preikchat**, *Assistant Registrar, Transfer Credit Services & Saskatchewan Director, PCCAT*

This session focused on building an action plan for a national transfer credit system in Canada. Participants discussed the value propositions, barriers, and opportunities for developing such a system. They identified key values like interoperability and transparency, as well as significant barriers including institutional ego and protectionism. The group generated specific action items, such as aligning data standards and connecting with other transfer credit systems. Lyseng emphasized that creating a national system would require grassroots efforts from all participants, as there is no federal ministry responsible for education in Canada.

The group discussed student feedback and challenges in transfer processes, with community participants highlighting that students often don't know about transfer options despite periodic outreach efforts and the need for better processes, policies, and information sharing between institutions to improve student experiences. The conversation ended with a call to action for participants to continue momentum towards a national transfer system.

[Watch Recording](#)



Driving Canada: Recognition Gaps, Systemic Barriers, and Policy Futures

- **Beka Tavartkiladze**, *Senior Director, Global Education and Knowledge, World Education Services*
- **Haroon Khalid**, *Co-Founder and Executive Director, Qissa*
- **Anam Zakaria**, *Co-Founder and Strategic Director, Qissa*

This powerful session focused on the "Driving Canada" oral history project, which documents the experiences of immigrants in Toronto who have driven for Uber. The project, led by Qissa in collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, aims to challenge the framing of immigrant stories and highlight systemic barriers faced by immigrants, even those with Canadian credentials. The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by immigrants in finding employment commensurate with their qualifications and experience, with many resorting to gig economy jobs like Uber driving. The conversation also touched on the work of World Education Services (WES) in credential recognition and the need for continued innovation in this field.

Anam Zakaria and Haroon Khalid highlighted the human cost of immigration and the need to shift the narrative around immigrant experiences. They emphasized the importance of recognizing the skills and experiences of immigrants, addressing the emotional burden of underemployment, and changing public perception to avoid glorifying resilience at the expense of systemic change. The panelists also noted the limitations of formal support systems for newcomers and the need for more inclusive and representative institutions.

[Watch Recording](#)



Co-Creating Next-Generation Principles for Recognition, Transfer, and Governance to Support Mobility

- **Joanne Duklas**, *Executive Director, The GDN Network; Consultant, Duklas Cornerstone Consulting Inc.*
- **Charmaine Hack**, *VP, External Relations, Enrolment & Partnership, Centennial College*
- **Andrew Wilson**, *Director of IT, Data and Transfer Services, Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)*
- **Ann Marie Lyseng**, *Senior Manager, ACAT Secretariat/Learner Pathways; Chair, PCCAT*
- **Rooksana Rajab**, *President, Resonance Consulting; GDN Signatory*

Dr. Rajab is a consultant from Cape Town, South Africa, who is a GDN signatory and advocate for digital ecosystems. She was involved in the Cloud PSET Project in South Africa, which aimed to create digital credentials similar to MyCreds in Canada and My eQuals in Australia and New Zealand. Through her work with the GDN, she is advocating and conducting research to advance governance principles to help guide future digital capacity building at the nation state level. This session sought to share progress on this project and capture Canadian input into the consultation process.

Rajab shared the research and consultation to date and presented the progress and future plans for developing a global governance framework for digital platforms in education, highlighting the need for dialogue and alignment on principles such as human rights, transparency, trust, and citizen agency. She discussed challenges like fragmented regulations, trust deficits, slow institutional responses, digital inequality, and data sovereignty, emphasizing the importance of creating an inclusive and adaptable framework. She noted the consultation will continue with the final framework being presented at the upcoming GDN conference in Oslo as an open-source tool to advance future efforts with creating digital credential and recognition ecosystems around the world.

The co-panelists emphasized the importance of creating a living framework that can accommodate different regional and cultural perspectives while providing basic guardrails for productive conversations. Participants were encouraged to engage with a Padlet discussion board to share their thoughts on governance principles, with a particular focus on what principles would be recommended for creating digital ecosystems. Sample highlight principles included the following:

The consultation discussions amplified the importance of knowledge sharing and succession planning in educational institutions, emphasizing the need to document

both procedural knowledge and "soul work" that isn't easily captured in documentation to aid digital literacy and mature evolution of ecosystem capacity building. The discussion also touched on the need for sustainable financing models and incentives for continuous engagement.

Watch Recording

GDN NETWORK **Resonance Consulting Services**

Key discussion points

1. What recommendations might you have for a future GDN Governance Framework that is intended for use by the community to advance creation of digital ecosystems in region?
2. What other principles do you suggest it include?
3. What further advice would the members suggest?

GDN Events | Rooksana Rajab (Dr)

Sticky Notes:

- What governance principles would you recommend to support a sustainable digital service for members for your region?
- Accountability and transparency
- Equity and transparency
- Privacy considerations
- Resilience
- Quality assurance
- Accountability and Consistency!
- Transparency
- Data security, reliability, trust
- Interoperability
- Thinking future of technology working up with developments
- Stakeholder/off stories
- Continuous Improvement and Feedback loops

Camera

Closing Reflections: Building Together, Moving Forward

- **Christine Arnold**, *Interim Associate Vice-President (Academic) Students, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador*
- **Nan Travers**, *Director, Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning, SUNY Empire State University*

Dr. Travers and Dr. Arnold pulled the overarching themes from this first GDN PCCAT regional meeting and amplified the overarching call to continue focusing on the development and implementation of a national framework for credit transfer and student mobility to support recognition. Participants discussed prioritizing key areas such as data security, reliability, trust, and the removal of barriers to recognition of learning. Participants committed to taking action in their institutions, including reviewing policies, building partnerships, and sharing knowledge from the conference.

[Watch Recording](#)





CONNECTED LEARNING

CREATING RECOGNITION PATHWAYS
FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

MAY 28 - 30, 2025



**THE
GDN
NETWORK**

Learn more about
The GDN Network at
<https://groningendeclaration.org>



Learn more about the Pan-Canadian
Consortium on Admissions & Transfer
(PCCAT) at <https://pccat.ca>